



State of Louisiana

Department of Environmental Quality



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M.J. "Mike" Foster
Governor

J. Dale Givens
Secretary

For Immediate Release

For More Information Contact Jennifer Betbeze

225-273-2503

jbetbeze@deq.state.la.us

City/Parish to Make Major Collection System Improvements Through Joint DEQ, DOJ Consent Decree

BATON ROUGE - The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the United States Department of Justice announced today a settlement with the City of Baton Rouge and East Baton Rouge Parish (City/Parish) intended to address the sewage collection system problems that have plagued the City/Parish for many years.

This joint consent decree will require extensive improvements to the municipal sewage treatment and collection system to reduce discharges of untreated sewage to waters of the state, including local bayous and creeks. The City/Parish has committed to select and implement a comprehensive improvement plan, which will be completed within 13 to 15 years depending on the alternative, selected and the improvements will costs between \$330 and \$461 million.

As a part of the consent decree, the City/Parish will pay a \$729,500 penalty to be divided between DEQ and the federal government and will spend an estimated \$1.12 million for supplemental environmental projects to connect several areas within the city that are currently served by neighborhood sewage treatment plants or septic systems. These projects will benefit the citizens of East Baton Rouge Parish and the environment by eliminating additional discharges of raw or poorly treated sewage in the parish.

"The ultimate goal of this consent decree is make sure that the untreated sewage from homes and businesses gets to the treatment plants to be adequately treated," said Assistant Secretary of the Office of Environmental Compliance Linda Levy. In addition, the consent decree requires the City/Parish to implement other remedial measures, including a sanitary sewer overflow response plan, preventative maintenance plans for both the collection and treatment systems, and public outreach and awareness programs.

DEQ and EPA will share in the responsibilities of ensuring that the City/Parish meets the requirements in the consent decree. If these requirements are not complied with, the City/Parish will be liable for stipulated penalties. DEQ's Surveillance Division will also continue to investigate complaints received by citizens and perform routine inspection at the municipal treatment facilities owned and operated by the City/Parish.

"We know that it took a lot of time and effort on the part of Mayor Simpson and the City/Parish government to get this far with the project and we applaud them for their work. We look forward to working with the City/Parish to implement the consent decree in a cooperative effort to improve the water quality for the citizens of the parish," said Levy.
